

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /081 W

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1663

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 151

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: LOYALIST STRIKE SET TO BEGIN AT MIDNIGHT

REF: (A) BELFAST 149 (B) BELFAST 147

1. SUMMARY: UNIONIST ACTION COUNCIL LEADERS ERNEST BAIRD AND REVEREND IAN PAISLEY MET WITH SECRETARY OF STATE ROY MASON MAY 2 BUT FAILED TO SECURE PROMISES OF NEW APPROACH TO SECURITY ADEQUATE FOR THEM TO CALL OFF LOYALIST PROTEST. STRIKE WILL BEGIN AT MIDNIGHT TONIGHT. THERE LITTLE OR NO SUPPORT FOR STRIKE FROM TRADE UNIONS OR MASS OF POPULATION BUT SMALL NUMBERS DETERMINED STRIKERS, PARTICULARLY IN ELECTRICAL SERVICE, CAN CAUSE CONSIDERABLE DISRUPTION. MR. MASON SEEMS DETERMINED PREVENT ILLEGAL ACTS SUCH AS ROADBLOCKS. RUMORS BEGINNING PROLIFERATE WITH ONE SUGGESTING ULTIMATE GOAL OF SOME IN ACTION COUNCIL IS INDEPENDENCE FOR PROVINCE. CONSULATE GENERAL STAFF WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ALL SERVICES TO PUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY OF STATE ROY MASON MET WITH REVEREND IAN  
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PAISLEY AND ERNEST BAIRD THE LEADERS OF THE UNIONIST ACTION COUNCIL MORNING MAY 2. MEETING CAME AS RESULT OF PAISLEY REQUEST LAST WEEK. NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE MADE IT CLEAR MASON MEETING WITH PAISLEY AS MP AND BAIRD AS LEADER NEW POLITICAL PARTY NOT RPT NOT AS MEMBERS UAC. ACCORDING TO UAC PRESS CONFERENCE LATER, MR. MASON DID NOT RPT NOT CONVINCE LEADERS OF HIS INTENTIONS TO DESTROY IRA AND SO

STRIKE WILL BE ON FROM MIDNIGHT TONIGHT. ACTION COUNCIL CALLED FOR SCHOOLS TO CLOSE.

3. MR. MASON HAS CONTINUED TO TALK AND PRACTICE FIRMNESS IN PREPARATION FOR PROTEST. THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING MOBILIZED THE ENTIRE ULSTER DEFENSE REGIMENT (UDR), SOME 8000 MEN AND WOMEN FOR FULL-TIME DUTY FOR UP TO ONE WEEK FROM NOON APRIL 30. THE UDR IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE GUARDS FOR BARRACKS AND GOVERNMENT INSTALLATIONS. ONE "SPEARHEAD BATTALION", THE WELSH FUSILIERS, ARRIVED IN THE PROVINCE MAY 1 AND ANOTHER, THE ROYAL GREEN JACKETS, IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE TODAY. THIS WILL MEAN AN ADDITIONAL 1200 REGULAR TROOPS AVAILABLE BRINGING TOTAL TO ABOUT 15,500. ALL POLICE LEAVE HAS BEEN CANCELLED AND TOTAL SECURITY FORCES WILL BE ABOUT 33,000. VANGUARD LEADER WILLIAM CRAIG, UNSUCCESSFUL IN ATTEMPTS TO MEET WITH BAIRD AND PAISLEY, HAS ADVISED CAUTION SO THAT TROOPS CANNOT BE ACCUSED OF "LOYALIST BASHING" THERE IS GENERAL BELIEF IN PROVINCE THAT ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS SETTING ROADBLOCKS, WILL NOT RPT NOT SUCCEED TO EXTENT THEY DID IN 1974. MR. MASON IS SEEN AS MORE DECISIVE, OR LESS COMPLICATED THAN HIS PREDECESSOR AND SEEMS TO BE FREE OF DOWNING STREET DIRECTION IN THIS SITUATION.

4. AT MASS MEETING OF SOME 7-8000 HARLAND AND WOLFF SHIPYARD WORKERS APRIL 29, AN OVERSHELMING MAJORITY VOTED TO CONTINUE WORKING. MANUAL WORKERS AT VITAL BALLYLUMFORD POWER STATION ALSO VOTED NOT RPT NOT TO STRIKE UNLESS IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT UAC ACTION HAS SUPPORT OF OTHER WORKERS.

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HOWEVER IT AGAIN NOTED THAT A FEW TECHNICIANS HERE COULD, BY STRIKING, CURTAIL MUCH OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO PROVINCE UNLESS GOVERNMENT CAN PROVIDE EXPERTS FROM ELSEWHERE. IRISH CONFEDERATION TRADE UNIONS AND THOSE AFFILIATED WITH TUC HAVE REJECTED STRIKE CALL. VANGUARD PARTY AND NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR PARTY HAVE JOINED ALLIANCE AND UNIONIST PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND IN CALLS FOR RECONSIDERATION. PRESS AND PUBLIC CRITICISMS OF PROPOSED STRIKE CONTINUE. BELFAST NEWS LETTER CONTINUING SERIES OF EDITORIALS REITERATING THEME THAT, WHILE OBJECTIVES OF STRIKE, PARTICULARLY MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST PROVISIONAL IRA, ARE LAUDABLE, ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES WILL BE DISASTROUS. MR. MASON AND SECURITY FORCES RECEIVED UNUSUAL BOOST FROM SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) ACTIVIST PADDY DEVLIN WHO IN INTERVIEW WITH IRISH NEWS MAY 2 SAID: " WHAT GREAT ISSUE IS AT STAKE ON THIS OCCASION? IS IT THAT OF GETTING MR. MASON TO IMPROVE HIS SECURITY OPERATIONS? BUT HE IS ALREADY DOING THAT ACCORDING TO CURRENT STATISTICS AND BETTER THAN ANYONE TO DATE. THE FACTS SPEAK

FOR THEMSELVES AND THEY ARE: FEWER SHOOTINGS, FEWER DEATHS BY SHOOTING, FEWER WOUNDINGS THAN DURING THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR. THERE ARE MORE APPREHENSIONS OF LAW BREAKERS, MORE CONVICTIONS IN THE COURTS THAN IN ANY OTHER PERIOD IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS. MOREOVER 13 CATHOLICS HAVE BEEN MURDERED BY IDENTIFIABLE LOYALIST PARAMILITARY AGENTS AGAINST NINE PROTESTANTS BY IDENTIFIABLE REPUBLICAN PARAMILITARY AGENTS. HENCE IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THERE IS LESS REASON FOR PAISLEY' S ACTION NOW THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE RECENT PAST." OFFICIAL UNIONIST LEADER HARRY WEST HAS CALLED FOR WORKERS TO IGNORE STRIKE CALL AND ORANGE ORDER GRAND MASTER REV. MARTIN SMYTH CALLED FOR ONE-WEEK POSTPONEMENT OF STRIKE TO PERMIT SECRET BALLOT BY WORKERS ON WHETHER THEY WANT STRIKE. ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE AND RED HAND COMMANDOS HAVE DENIED THEY WOULD PARTICIPATE IN STRIKE BUT WOULD BE ON "STANDBY ALERT" HOWEVER, PROTEST DOES HAVE CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY OUTSIDE BELFAST. PAISLEY RALLIED SEVERAL

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THOUSAND DETERMINED PEOPLE IN BALLYMENA COUNTY ANTRIM APRIL 23. ULSTER SPECIAL CONSTABULARY ASSOCIATION, SOME 10,000 EX-"B SPECIALS" SUPPORT PROTEST. ULSTER SERVICE CORPS (USC) DEFIANTLY INCREASED ROAD-BLOCKS IN COUNTIES TYRONE AND (SOUTH) DOWN OVER WEEKEND DESPITE ANOTHER COURT HEARING APRIL 29 IN COOKSTOWN OF SEVEN USC MEMBERS SUMMONED FOR SETTING ILLEGAL ROADBLOCKS. ALL THESE HEARINGS HAVE BEEN ADJOURNED.

5. RUMORS ARE PROLIFERATING IN THIS HEATING SITUATION. ONE, ORIGINATING WITH BELFAST ORANGE ORDER LEADER THOMAS PASSMORE, ALLUDES TO MYSTERIOUS MEETINGS BETWEEN MEMBERS UAC AND "REPUBLICANS." GERRY FITT OF SDLP AND BASIL GLASS, DEPUTY LEADER OF ALLIANCE, HAVE ECHOED "RUMORS" OF THESE MEETINGS AS HAVE UNNAMED ELEMENTS OF ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION REPORTED IN NEWS LETTER. IMPLICATION THIS RUMOR IS THAT ULTIMATE AIM OF "SOME" IN ACTION COUNCIL (NOT PAISLEY) IS INDEPENDENT ULSTER. ANOTHER RUMOR HAS UDA SPLIT WITH SOME GEOGRAPHIC UNITS OPPOSING "MANIPULATION OF ORGANIZATION BY POLITICIANS." SUPREME COMMANDER ANDY TYRIE IS ALLEGED TO HAVE REPLIED TO THIS CRITICISM BY SAYING, "WE ARE MANIPULATING THE POLITICIANS." PROVISIONAL IRA HAS ANNOUNCED IT WOULD PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN REPUBLICAN AREAS AND WOULD HAVE UNITS ON "FULL ALERT".

6. GENERAL PUBLIC IN BELFAST, SOUTH ANTRIM AND NORTH DOWN AT LEAST, ARE REACTING WITH RESIGNATION AND PANIC BUYING. ALL BREAD STOCKS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED SINCE APRIL 29 AND THERE IS ALREADY SHORTAGE OF FLOUR, SUGAR, CANDLES AND DRIED MILK. BELFAST BUS DRIVERS ARE TO MEET

TODAY TO DECIDE ACTION. EVEN SHOULD DRIVERS DECIDE TO  
CONTINUE WORKING, THE BUSES ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE  
TO HI-JACKING. CONSULATE GENERAL LOCAL STAFF  
DETERMINED TO GET TO WORK TO CONTINUE PROVIDE VISA AND  
OTHER SERVICES AND TO RESPOND TO GROWING NUMBER OF CALLS  
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FOR ADVICE FROM VISITING AND RESIDENT AMERICANS.  
ALL PERSONNEL HAVE DOCUMENTS IDENTIFYING THEM AS USG  
EMPLOYEES. PRINCIPAL OFFICER HAS ASKED THAT THEY EXERCISE  
UTMOST DISCRETION AND NOT RPT NOT RISK PHYSICAL INJURY  
IN ATTEMPTING TO REACH OFFICE.

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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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